

Childers Votes to Restore Competition, Fairness in Health Insurance Marketplace

February 24, 2010

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Travis Childers (MS-01) voted to ensure that American consumers get a real choice and a fair deal when purchasing health insurance. The Health Insurance Industry Fair Competition Act will take away the anti-trust exemption for health insurance companies, requiring them to compete fairly and adhere to the same anti-trust laws as other industries. The bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support by a vote of 406 to 19.

“Today, millions of hard-working Americans are suffering from soaring premiums, low quality of coverage, and limited choices while insurance companies are jacking up prices and turning record profits,” said Congressman Childers. “Increasing competition among health care companies is central to lowering costs for consumers. This has been a core principle of mine since the beginning of the current health care reform debate.

“By ending the health insurance industry’s anti-trust exemption, today’s bipartisan legislation will require these companies to play by the same rules that every other American industry – save Major League Baseball – must follow. Under this legislation, hard-working North Mississippians will be able to choose among multiple providers and will ultimately have access to more affordable, higher quality health care.”

For 65 years, the health insurance industry has been legally exempt from anti-trust laws, and the federal government was banned from even investigating evidence of possible collusion. In the last 14 years alone, there have been 400 mergers among health insurers and now 94% of all insurance markets are “highly concentrated” – meaning consumers have little or no choice

between insurance providers.

Health insurers that were previously exempt from anti-trust laws will now bear legal responsibility for price fixing, dividing up territories among themselves and sabotaging their competitors in order to gain a monopoly in the marketplace. Such practices have been outlawed in other industries for decades.

A pro-gun, pro-life Mississippian, Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) represents the First Congressional District in North Mississippi. He is a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition and serves on the House Agriculture and Financial Services Committee. Congressman Childers co-chairs the reestablished bipartisan Congressional Rural Caucus and was appointed to the bipartisan Second Amendment Task Force. For more information, visit www.childers.house.gov

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